

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-7 in their entirety and add claims 8-29 as follows:

Claims 1-7 (Cancelled).

Claim 8 (New) A composition for staining a microorganism comprising:
15 to 30 wt. % of an alkali substance; and
Chicago Sky Blue 6B.

Claim 9 (New) The composition according to claim 8, further comprising:
0 to 20 wt. % of methanol; and
0 to 2 wt. % of dimethyl sulfoxide, and
wherein the amount of said Chicago Sky Blue 6B ranges from 0.1 to 1 wt. %.

Claim 10 (New) The composition according to claim 9, wherein the amount of said methanol ranges from 10 to 20 wt. %.

Claim 11 (New) The composition according to claim 9, wherein the amount of said dimethyl sulfoxide ranges from 1 to 2 wt. %.

Claim 12 (New) The composition according to claim 8, wherein said microorganism is fungi.

Claim 13 (New) The composition according to claim 12, wherein said fungi is a member of a genus selected from the group consisting of Trichophyton, Candida and Malassezia.

Claim 14 (New) A method for detecting a microorganism in a sample comprising: contacting said microorganism with the composition of claim 8 to yield a stained microorganism; and detecting said stained microorganism by direct microscopy.

Claim 15 (New) The method according to claim 14, further comprising: heating said sample to a temperature ranging from 60°C to 80°C for a period ranging from 2 minutes to 5 minutes after said contacting, but before said detecting.

Claim 16 (New) The method according to claim 14, wherein said sample is obtained from a foot, a nail plate, a nail bed, a hair, a dander, a vesicle, and a papula.

Claim 17 (New) The method according to claim 14, wherein said microorganism is fungi.

Claim 18 (New) The method according to claim 17, wherein said fungi is a member of a genus selected from the group consisting of Trichophyton, Candida and Malassezia.

Claim 19 (New) A composition for staining a microorganism comprising: 15 to 30 wt. % of an alkali substance; and Rhodamine B.

Claim 20 (New) The composition according to claim 19, further comprising:

0 to 30 wt. % of methanol; and

5 to 20 wt. % of dimethyl sulfoxide, and

wherein the amount of said Rhodamine B ranges from 0.005 to 0.5 wt. %.

Claim 21 (New) The composition according to claim 20, wherein the amount of said methanol ranges from 10 to 30 wt. %.

Claim 22 (New) The composition according to claim 20, wherein the amount of said dimethyl sulfoxide ranges from 10 to 20 wt. %.

Claim 23 (New) The composition according to claim 19, wherein said microorganism is fungi.

Claim 24 (New) The composition according to claim 23, wherein said fungi is a member of a genus selected from the group consisting of *Trichophyton*, *Candida* and *Malassezia*.

Claim 25 (New) A method for detecting a microorganism in a sample comprising: contacting said microorganism with the composition of claim 19 to yield a stained microorganism; and

detecting said stained microorganism by direct microscopy.

Claim 26 (New) The method according to claim 25, further comprising:

heating said sample to a temperature ranging from 60°C to 80°C for a period ranging from 2 minutes to 5 minutes after said contacting, but before said detecting.

Claim 27 (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein said sample is obtained from a foot, a nail plate, a nail bed, a hair, a dander, a vesicle, and a papula.

Claim 28 (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein said microorganism is fungi.

Claim 29 (New) The method according to claim 28, wherein said fungi is a member of a genus selected from the group consisting of Trichophyton, Candida and Malassezia.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

The present amendment cancels claims 1-7 and adds claims 8-29.

Support for newly added claims 8 and 19 is found at specification page 3, lines 2-24.

Support for newly added claims 9 and 20 is found at specification page 3, lines 14-24, page 5, lines 22-27.

Support for newly added claims 10, 11, 21 and 22 is found at specification page 3, lines 25-27, page 4, lines 1-3, page 5, lines 22-27, page 7, lines 22-27, page 8, lines 1-6, page 11, lines 1-9.

Support for newly added claims 12, 13, 17, 18, 23, 24, 28 and 29 is found at specification page 4, lines 17-20.

Support for newly added claims 14 and 25 is found at specification page 3, lines 2-24, page 5, lines 22-27, as well as claim 7.

Support for newly added claims 15 and 26 is found at specification page 5, line 8.

Support for newly added claims 16 and 27 is found at specification page 4, lines 23-27, page 5, lines 1-5.

It is believed that the addition of claims 8-29 has not resulted in the introduction of new matter..